




# FARMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

	<b>Policy Number:</b> 101-08	<b>Effective Date:</b> 11/11/2016	
	<b>Subject:</b> Social Media		
	<b>Approved by:</b>  <b>Steven D. Hebbe, Chief of Police</b>		

### PURPOSE:

To establish the Department's position on the utility, management, administration, and oversight of social media. This policy is not meant to address one particular form of social media, rather social media in general, to allow for new tools and future technologies.

### POLICY:

It is the policy of the Farmington Police Department to acknowledge the new and potentially valuable forums which social media provides in meeting the Department's community outreach, problem solving, investigative, crime prevention, and related objectives. It is our policy to identify potential uses that may be explored or expanded upon as deemed reasonable by administrative and supervisory personnel. The Department also recognizes the role that these tools play in the personal lives of some of our personnel. The personal use of social media can have a bearing on department personnel in their official capacity. As such, this policy provides information of a precautionary nature, as well as prohibitions on the use of social media by department personnel.

### PROCEDURE:

#### Definitions:

**Social Media:** A category of Internet-based resources that integrate user-generated content and user participation. This includes, but is not limited to, social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, MySpace), microblogging sites (Twitter, Nixle), photo-and video sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube), wikis (Wikipedia), blogs and news sites.

## DEPARTMENTAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

### Department-Sanctioned Presence:

1. Where possible, each Department-created social media page shall include an introductory statement clearly specifying the purpose and scope of the agency's presence on the website.
2. Where possible, the page(s) should link to the Department's official website.
3. All Department-related social media sites or pages shall be approved by the Chief, or a designee, and shall be administered by the Community Relations Liaison/PIO or as otherwise designated.

4. Pages for specific officers, divisions, or programs within the Department must be approved by the Chief, or a designee. Care must be taken to maintain the integrity of the Department's online marketing image and its reputation for professionalism and that each on-line page remains consistent with the Department's overall efforts.
5. Where possible, social media pages shall clearly indicate they are maintained by the Department and have Department contact information prominently displayed.
6. Social media content shall adhere to applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including all information technology, records management, Department, and City policies.

#### **Department-Sanctioned Use:**

Department personnel representing the Department via social media outlets shall:

1. Conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Department and adhere to all Department standards of conduct.
2. Identify themselves as a member of the Department.
3. Not make statements about the guilt or innocence of any suspect or arrestee, or comments concerning pending prosecutions, nor post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate confidential information.
4. Not conduct political activities or private business.
5. Observe and abide by all copyright, trademark, and service mark restrictions in posting materials to electronic media.

#### **Uses:**

Social media is a valuable investigative tool when seeking evidence or information about:

1. Missing persons;
2. Wanted persons;
3. Gang participation;
4. Crimes perpetrated online;
5. Photos or videos of a crime posted by a participant or observer.

Social media can be used for community outreach and engagement by:

1. Providing crime prevention tips;
2. Offering online-reporting opportunities;

3. Sharing crime maps and data;
4. Soliciting tips about unsolved crimes.

Social media can be used to make time-sensitive notifications related to:

1. Road closures;
2. Special events;
3. Weather emergencies;
4. Missing or endangered persons;
5. Any other types of emergency events.

Social media may be used for:

1. Recruiting;
2. Advertising employment opportunities;
3. Publicizing volunteer positions; and
4. Offering training opportunities.

## **PERSONAL USE**

*In accordance with State and Federal law, Department personnel shall abide by the following when using social media:*

### **Precautions and Prohibitions:**

Department personnel are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair working relationships of the Department for which loyalty and confidentiality are important, impede the performance of duties, or negatively impact the public perception of the Department.

As public employees, Department personnel are cautioned that speech, on or off-duty, made pursuant to their official duties is not protected under the First Amendment and may form the basis for discipline if deemed detrimental to the Department. Department personnel should assume their speech and related activity on social media sites reflects upon their office and this Department.

Department personnel shall not post, transmit, or otherwise disseminate any information to which they have access as a result of their employment without written permission from the Chief or a designee.

Department personnel may not display logos, uniforms, or similar identifying items on personal web pages. This does not include the display of such items when associated with public service type events. For example;

sporting events, Special Olympics activities etc. If an employee is unsure whether the display of such items would be acceptable, approval should be obtained from the Chief of Police or designee.

When using social media, Department personnel should be mindful that their speech becomes part of the worldwide electronic domain and that such information remains available on-line for an indefinite period of time, even when original postings are deleted by the poster. Adherence to the Department's Code of Conduct, Ethics and Sexual Harassment Policy are required in the personal use of social media.

Department personnel should be aware that speech containing obscene or sexually explicit language, images, or acts and statements that ridicule, malign, disparage, or otherwise express bias against any race, religion, sexual orientation, or protected class of individuals may provide grounds for undermining or impeaching an officer's testimony in criminal proceedings.

Department personnel may not divulge information gained because of their authority; make any statements, speeches, endorsements, or publish materials that could reasonably be considered to represent the views of the Department without express authorization.

Department personnel should expect any information created, transmitted, downloaded, exchanged, or discussed in a public online forum may be accessed by the Department at any time.

Department personnel should use caution in the type of information published on social media venues and should carefully monitor the accessibility of information published on social media venues so as to not unduly jeopardize the safety of the employee, the employee's family, or that of fellow employees within the Department.